

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA**

Monday, May 2, 2022 at 5:00 PM  
Room 22 Upstairs, Recreation Center

- This meeting will be conducted in person and by using the online meeting platform, Zoom. The public may view the meeting online at [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com) and click on “Join A Meeting” enter Meeting ID 867 3299 3658
- To listen to the meeting, please dial (646) 876-9923 and when prompted enter Meeting ID 867 3299 3658
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Members:

Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos  
Dr. Dottie Morris  
Janis Manwaring  
Dr. Mohammed Saleh  
Dr. Shaun Filiault  
Marti Fiske  
Hunter Kirschner  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson  
Councilor Catherine Workman

Staff:

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Alternates:

Ritu Budakoti  
Heidi Schwieger

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of April 4, 2022 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee Report
  - a. Approval of April 12, 2022 Minutes
5. Committee Programs for 2022
  - a. MLK Day – January 17th
  - b. Holi Festival – Not Taking Place 2022
  - c. Pride Month – October
  - d. Juneteenth – June 19th
  - e. Keene International Festival – September 24th
  - f. Indigenous People Day – October 10th
6. New, Other Business
7. Adjourn – Next Meeting Monday, June 6, 2022 at 5:00 PM

1 City of Keene  
2 New Hampshire

3  
4  
5 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE  
6 MEETING MINUTES  
7

Monday, April 4, 2022

5:00 PM

Room 22,  
Recreation Center

Members Present:

Jan Manwaring  
Dr. Dottie Morris (Zoom)  
Dr. Mohammed Saleh (Zoom)  
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair  
Dr. Shaun Filiault, Vice Chair  
Marti Fiske  
Hunter Kirschner  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson  
Catherine Workman, Councilor

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation & Facilities  
Director

Members Not Present:

Heidi Schwieger, Alternate  
Ritu Budakoti, Alternate

8  
9  
10 **1) Welcome and Call to Order**

11  
12 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

13  
14 **2) Approval of March 7, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

15  
16 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos noted a typo on page 8: "HDC" should be changed to "HRC." Mr.  
17 Bohannon stated that he will correct that.

18  
19 Mr. Aronson made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 7, 2022, as amended. Ms.  
20 Manwaring seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

21  
22 **3) Finance Report**

23  
24 Mr. Bohannon stated that nothing has changed with the finance report. Chair Cunha-  
25 Vasconcelos replied that it looks like the Keene International Festival (KIF) has had some  
26 movement but the HRC has not.  
27

28 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the committee does not need to vote on this item. She  
29 asked if anyone had questions. Hearing none, she moved to the next agenda item.

30

31 **4) Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee Report**

32

33 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos noted that the Racial Justice and Community Safety (RJCS)  
34 Committee issued its report almost a year ago. She continued that the HRC has not made good  
35 progress on it during that time. Given that the HRC meets once a month for an hour, even if they  
36 devoted a quarter or half the meeting to this, it seems unrealistic to keep moving at this pace and  
37 expect to be successful. Staff created a spreadsheet to help the committee visualize everything  
38 and make the process more accessible. However, she does not think that continuing to work on  
39 the report as a function of this once a month HRC meeting is the way to do this. Options she  
40 thought of are 1) to devote a substantial time block, such as four hours on a Saturday, a couple  
41 times; 2) to devote hour-long meetings to the report a few times over the course of a month; or 3)  
42 to create a work group/subcommittee to at least begin digesting the report and come up with  
43 action items. However, she thinks this work is worth the attention of the whole group. She  
44 asked for others' thoughts.

45

46 Discussion ensued, and several members spoke in favor of meeting for a few hours on a couple  
47 Saturdays. Others had conflicts on Saturdays, so other days of the week were proposed.  
48 Discussion ensued about the logistics. Dr. Morris asked if they would have to notice the  
49 meeting. Mr. Bohannon replied yes. Mr. Bohannon offered to create a scheduling poll. He  
50 continued that Councilor Workman and Dr. Morris were on the committee and he wants to hear  
51 from them about this idea [for the HRC to meet to do this work outside of regular, monthly HRC  
52 meetings].

53

54 Councilor Workman stated that she thinks it is a good idea. She continued that the Monadnock  
55 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Coalition (MDEIB) is doing work on this, too, but  
56 the recommendation was to give the RJCS Report to the HRC first, before the MDEIB Coalition  
57 was even formed, so she thinks the HRC has the responsibility to work on this. They can  
58 collaborate and check in with the MDEIB Coalition at some point, but it does not need to stop  
59 what the HRC is doing in the meantime.

60

61 Dr. Morris stated that she is fine with it, because she thinks the implementation of certain things  
62 will need to be more of a City commitment than a commitment of the committee. She continued  
63 that she is fine with this direction to come up with what the HRC might call an implementation  
64 plan. Determining implementation strategies should be the goal of this committee.

65

66 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the report has action items intended for the City and ones  
67 intended for local businesses. She continued that it does not feel inappropriate to have the HRC  
68 and the MDEIB Coalition working on it. She and Mr. Bohannon have discussed how there is not  
69 an active interface between the two groups, but two HRC members are also members of the  
70 MDEIB Coalition, who can help the HRC understand what is happening with, and how to help,

71 the MDEIB Coalition. She asked if they should add that as an agenda item, to have a quick  
72 download from Dr. Morris and Councilor Workman. Dr. Morris and Councilor Workman  
73 replied that that is fine. They both also stated that they plan to attend the next MDEIB Coalition  
74 meeting, 4:00 PM on Monday, April 18.

75  
76 Dr. Filiault asked that the HRC decide now, in this meeting, when to hold the first meeting about  
77 the RJCS Report, instead of creating a scheduling poll. He requested that it be held before the  
78 HRC's May meeting. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos agreed. Discussion ensued about the date. The  
79 group decided upon Tuesday, April 12, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated  
80 that she will defer scheduling the next 2-hour meeting to a different day. Mr. Bohannon replied  
81 that they can assess, during the April 12 meeting, whether an additional 2-hour meeting is  
82 needed.

83

84 **5) Committee Programs for 2022**

85 **A) MLK Day – Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>**

86  
87 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the HRC debriefed this at the last meeting. She continued  
88 that she does not think there is anything they need to discuss today. The next MLK Day is far  
89 enough away that they do not need to be thinking about the programming now.

90

91 **B) Holi Festival – Spring**

92

93 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that Holi Festival is not happening this year.

94

95 **C) Pride Month – October**

96

97 Dr. Filiault stated that he and Mr. Kirschner spoke at length after the HRC's meeting with the  
98 people from the self-identified Keene Pride group. He continued that they determined that the  
99 HRC might not be able to constructively work with Keene Pride at this time, for a number of  
100 reasons. Keene Pride's vision of the scope of what they wanted for Keene seemed more akin to  
101 a New York City-style Pride event, and while he congratulates them for their vision, he does not  
102 think Keene would be able to accommodate such an event, at least not for the first time. In  
103 addition, Keene Pride's plans seemed rather alcohol-oriented, which the City might not want to  
104 sponsor. A large component of the LGBTQ community is concerned with sobriety, so having an  
105 alcohol-focused event could be problematic. The Keene Pride group also does not have much  
106 awareness of the cultural issues and the history of Pride, which, from a human rights angle,  
107 would need to be the center of it. For a variety of reasons, he does not see a working relationship  
108 at this time between the HRC and Keene Pride.

109

110 Dr. Filiault continued that he and Mr. Kirschner discussed a productive way to go forward, and  
111 thought October, LGBTQ History Month, would be a good time to have an event. They  
112 discussed a potential schedule and theme: Connection and Reconnection. It is a way to connect  
113 the community to LGBT history and awareness, and a reconnection for LGBTQ persons in the

114 area, after disconnecting from each other during the pandemic. They talked about what it would  
115 mean to create an LGBTQ Pride event that is specific to Keene and has the Monadnock region in  
116 mind, rather than trying to impose a Boston- or NYC-style event onto the area. They propose a  
117 one-day event that is more modest in scope and uses local resources without trying to use a ton  
118 of City funding, and trying to involve local businesses. They envision starting the day with a  
119 Fun Run/Rainbow Run, which is connected to the region; then having a brunch; a BBQ block  
120 party on the Rec Center lawn; and a showing at Keene State College (KSC) of Before Stonewall.  
121 That is a documentary that talks about connection and community prior to the emergence of the  
122 modern LGBTQ rights movement. Later in the evening there would be two events, a lock-in at  
123 the Library for youth, with films related to the experiences of LGBTQ youth; and a more adult  
124 event in the Mabel Brown Room with possibly a cash bar. The advantage of having it at KSC  
125 would be the lack of over-serving. The alcohol would be incidental to the drag event. This is a  
126 more modest scope of event, with a connection on community throughout the entire thing, with  
127 speakers and events related to community and connection and LGBTQ history.

128  
129 Mr. Aronson asked if something significant about October makes it appropriate for Pride events.  
130 Dr. Filiault replied that it is LGBTQ History Month, but he does not know why October was  
131 selected for that. Mr. Kirschner replied that Coming Out Day is in October, too. He continued  
132 that LGBTQ History Month came from a high school teacher in the Midwest who wanted to be  
133 able to focus on that education, understanding the history and context of the LGBTQ community.

134  
135 Dr. Filiault stated that they could continue to connect with local businesses by distributing the  
136 Pride flags, and talk with the City Council about potentially running a Pride flag up the flagpole  
137 downtown for the weekend. They could move the issuance of the proclamation from June to  
138 October. In addition, one of the rugby teams that plays in the area's league is a Boston-based,  
139 all-gay team. They could see if the game against that team could be in October, to bring another  
140 event to the area, without having that grand scope. Mr. Bohannon had a conversation with  
141 Keene Pride and they seemed to be regretful about the way they came across, but [he, Mr.  
142 Kirschner, and Mr. Bohannon] have had multiple iterations of the conversations and they seem  
143 to go through the same cycle again and again. At this point, he thinks it is worth the HRC taking  
144 the lead, and telling Keene Pride that they are welcome to follow if they would like.

145  
146 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the program seems amazing. She asked how Dr. Filiault  
147 and Mr. Kirschner plan to get all of that done by themselves. Dr. Filiault replied that a lot of it is  
148 mild in scope. He continued that Pathways for Keene (PFK) is very good at organizing fun runs.  
149 If they work with PFK on that, it creates a local partnership connection and they could split the  
150 proceeds between PFK and an LGBTQ charity such as the Trevor Project. For the brunch, they  
151 would work with Brewbakers or other local businesses, asking to use their space. The heaviest  
152 lift would be the block party. Part of it would involve getting relevant organizations and non-  
153 profits to do tabling, and getting a DJ and food vendor. That is why they need to start working  
154 on this now. The other difficulty would be getting a performance for the Mabel Brown Room;  
155 they need to start looking for performers soon. It might not be very difficult, but they need to

156 actually start, which was the challenge last year – they kept going back and back and back.  
157 There is a point where they have to say, this has to happen.

158  
159 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked about the budget. Dr. Filiault stated that the largest cost would  
160 be the block party. He continued that they would obviously need to pay the performer, but the  
161 advantage of not doing a NYC-style Pride event is that they will not be hiring a major, expensive  
162 performer. The theme of Connection and Reconnection could mean choosing local, amateur  
163 performers who are connected to the community and even do a workshop talking about what  
164 drag is, why they choose to do drag, and so on and so forth.

165  
166 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that she is not questioning their choices; she is just trying to  
167 get an idea of how much they propose spending. Dr. Filiault replied that last year they allocated  
168 \$500 to a Pride event and never spent it. He continued that he thinks the initial ask would be  
169 \$500, and the advantages of making this a community event means they can ask for small  
170 amounts from local businesses. They could ask to adjust the \$500 if needed, but since the event  
171 will be modest and realistic, he does not think it is a particularly heavy lift.

172  
173 Regarding the potential cost of the film, Ms. Fiske stated that if Dr. Filiault or Mr. Kirschner  
174 gives her the title, she can see if it would be covered under the performers’ rights the Library has  
175 already. Dr. Filiault replied “Before Stonewall.” Dr. Morris replied that she can check with  
176 John [Scagliotti, the film-maker] to see if he has any control over that, if the Library does not  
177 have it covered. She continued that she is a board member of the Kopkind Colony. Dr. Filiault  
178 replied yes, that is another local connection, as Mr. Scagliotti is local. Ms. Fiske asked which  
179 films they wanted to have screened at the Library. Dr. Filiault replied films related to LGBTQ  
180 youth, preferably more popular ones, but whatever they could actually use without paying  
181 licensing fees. Ms. Fiske replied that she will start going through what the Library already has  
182 the rights to with the licenses they have, and then go from there. Dr. Filiault stated that also,  
183 similar to last year, they would like a curated display at the Library of LGBTQ-themed books.  
184 Ms. Fiske stated that she will look at more teen-oriented LGBTQ films, but first needs to check  
185 with the program staff to make sure they could do that. Part of that would be choosing which  
186 day, without bumping up against Indigenous People Day or Halloween. Mr. Aronson added that  
187 there is also Yom Kippur in October. Discussion continued about the dates, and Dr. Filiault  
188 stated that the weekend of October 1 would be ideal.

189  
190 Mr. Bohannon asked if Dr. Morris and/or Mr. Kirschner would have access to an intern who  
191 could help recruit the different agencies to come in. Mr. Kirschner and Dr. Morris replied yes,  
192 they could look into that.

193  
194 Dr. Filiault stated that they also need to think about a keynote speaker for the block party, such  
195 as Chris Pappas, who is an openly gay Congressman from NH. He continued that it is an  
196 election year so Congressman Pappas would probably be happy to speak, but he is partisan, and  
197 does the HRC want to bring a partisan element to the event? They would potentially then have

198 to open it up to everyone else who is running for office. They could ask Congressman Pappas to  
199 talk about his experience of being an openly gay person growing up in NH. Discussion ensued.

200  
201 Mr. Bohannon stated that they will have to change venues, because the Parks and Rec space is  
202 booked. He continued that Railroad Square is available. Dr. Filiault replied that Railroad Square  
203 would work. Mr. Kirschner agreed that downtown visibility is good. Mr. Bohannon replied that  
204 they can use the grass belt for the tents and service providers. He continued that he will reserve  
205 the space.

206  
207 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that of course, there are still questions and this is still an open  
208 event they can continue to discuss, but they will move on in the agenda for now. She continued  
209 that she will note that the Finance Report is going to start being more relevant, as they start to  
210 have more events looking to use a piece of the funds. The HRC will need to discuss how to go  
211 about that, which is something she will bring up under New Business.

212

213 **D) Juneteenth – June 19<sup>th</sup>**

214

215 Ms. Manwaring stated that the Juneteenth committee decided to go ahead with planning an event  
216 without worrying about what the YMCA is doing for Juneteenth. She continued that the  
217 Juneteenth committee would like to have the HRC's feedback about having the event on June  
218 18<sup>th</sup>, so that hopefully more people would be available to come and speak, dance, and so on and  
219 so forth. Last year they used three words – Recognize, Celebrate, and Educate – and the focus  
220 was on education. This year they decided to follow that theme, with five words this year, thanks  
221 to Dr. Morris. [They are Heal, Repair, Recognize, Celebrate, and Educate]. Last year they did  
222 some good education about what Juneteenth is and why it is important, and this year it will be  
223 more about action, healing, and caring.

224 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that another reason to have the event on the 18<sup>th</sup> is because June  
225 19<sup>th</sup> is Father's Day. She continued that they decided that the footprint would be the same  
226 duration, 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. They have the structure ironed out and they have tentative  
227 programming they need to go out and confirm.

228 Ms. Manwaring showed the event poster, and asked who came up with the beautiful design. Mr.  
229 Bohannon replied that his staff designed it. He continued that this poster is the preview, with  
230 two different versions – one is a promotional one like a “save the date.”

231 Ms. Manwaring stated that last year some people suggested they have a Juneteenth program to  
232 hand out so people knew what was coming, and they will be doing that this year.

233 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos and Ms. Manwaring asked the HRC what they think of the poster  
234 versions and program, and if they have strong preferences for the one with yellow or with white.  
235 Discussion ensued and the group decided on yellow. Ms. Manwaring asked if anyone objects to  
236 having the event on the 18<sup>th</sup> instead of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Hearing none, she stated that the next planning

237 meeting is tomorrow evening on Zoom if anyone wants to attend. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos  
238 replied that it is at 5:00 PM and is not a public meeting.

239 **E) Keene International Festival – September 24<sup>th</sup>**

240  
241 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she does not think any input from the HRC is needed at this  
242 point. She continued that she thinks last month the request was for volunteers and potential  
243 board members. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, they got a couple board members, and they met last  
244 week. He continued that they have a great program lined up. If anyone wants to help plan and  
245 organize, or do some fundraising, they can contact him. They anticipate a fundraising effort of  
246 about \$8,000 this year. They have a thought process of sustainability, so he thinks they will be  
247 in better shape than they were in the last couple years.

248  
249 Regarding a committee member's question, Mr. Bohannon replied yes, there will be food trucks  
250 and other, smaller food vendors. He gave examples and added that customers pay cash or credit  
251 to the particular vendors (as opposed to buying a ticket for the overall area).

252  
253 **F) Indigenous People Day – October 10<sup>th</sup>**

254  
255 Ms. Fiske stated that she is working with program staff at the Library to look at the budget,  
256 because they already had some stuff budgeted for Indigenous People Day. She continued that  
257 one option was the humanities grants that are available. They are looking to see if any particular  
258 speakers lined up with the humanities grants program are available for that weekend. She has a  
259 meeting with a staff person on Wednesday to talk about this.

260  
261 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that if Ms. Fiske needs anything for the budget, she can let the  
262 HRC know. Ms. Fiske replied that at this point she thinks they can find a way for the Library to  
263 handle this event so it does not need to come from the HRC's budget. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos  
264 replied that is great news and thanked Ms. Fiske.

265  
266 **6) New, Other Business**

267  
268 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if there was any public input.

269  
270 Christina "Teeny" Wold, of 32 Carroll Street, stated that she is impressed with what the HRC has  
271 done. She continued that the City is lucky to have this group. She is not sure if what she has to  
272 say fits with the group's procedure. Mr. Bohannon and Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos encouraged  
273 her to share her questions or thoughts. Ms. Wold stated that she would like to talk about  
274 understanding mental health issues, and the position that people with mental health issues are in  
275 in the city. She continued that she has benefited a lot lately from [Monadnock Area] Peer  
276 Support Agency and feels like the city needs some education about it.

277  
278 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked Ms. Wold to tell the HRC more about that. Ms. Wold replied  
279 that people with mental health issues are very capable of contributing a lot to the community.



280 She continued that there is interest in the Peer Support Agency, where she spends quite a bit of  
281 time, and she wants to see it out there a little more. She does know where to begin, for how that  
282 would happen, but she is just putting it out there.

283  
284 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that she would love to talk more with Ms. Wold about what  
285 her experience has been and how the HRC can get the Peer Support Agency more involved. She  
286 continued that maybe they can talk outside of this meeting.

287  
288 Mr. Bohannon thanked Ms. Wold for her input. He continued that he knows this is not a full  
289 response by any means, but he wants to say that the Youth Services Department runs a City  
290 youth program. Last year, that youth program started a community mental health awareness  
291 night. They invited vendors to the front lawn, bringing all the community partners together for  
292 the awareness of mental health. Monadnock Area Peer Support is part of that particular group,  
293 but there might be other opportunities to make more awareness happen.

294  
295 Dr. Filiault stated that related to that, it is important for the HRC to remember that their mission  
296 statement is about social justice, nonviolence, equity, diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism,  
297 and mental health awareness and preserving the equity and dignity of people who work with  
298 mental health issues is part of that mission as well. He continued that they can include it under  
299 the umbrella of the HRC's work.

300  
301 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that that touches on some of what she wanted to bring up as  
302 New Business, but she knows they are short on time. She asked Dr. Filiault what his item for  
303 New Business was.

304  
305 Dr. Filiault replied that the HRC's budget is trying to do a lot right now, and they are spending  
306 more now than they are bringing in each year from the City. He continued that this may be a  
307 very tough lift, for the City, but it may be time for the HRC to ask for more than the \$500 that  
308 they traditionally receive each year. They have expanded the scope of their mission from beyond  
309 just the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day breakfast to now doing Juneteenth, the Pride festival, and so  
310 much more, which is costing more than \$500. Budget season is approaching. Mr. Bohannon  
311 replied that the public part, at least, is still ahead. Dr. Filiault stated that if they were to double  
312 their request to \$1,000 it might pass, particularly since the Mayor has indicated that he likes the  
313 work the HRC is doing. He thinks it is also time to look at grants to fund the HRC's work,  
314 because \$500 will be depleted quickly.

315  
316 Mr. Bohannon replied that this conversation has not come up before, so he cannot address it this  
317 time, but there could be some last minute political will to address that, and he can certainly add  
318 [the increased request] next year, within his recommendation. This year, it would definitely have  
319 to come from the floor of the public or the City Council. Discussion continued. Mr. Bohannon  
320 stated that at the end of this year, if the HRC does all that it has set out to do, they will have a  
321 good idea of how much all of their [programs] cost each year, by the next budget season.

322

323 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that more broadly, she has some existential questions for the  
324 HRC members to think about. First of all, she thinks Ms. Wold’s presence here is fortuitous,  
325 because although it is part of the HRC’s remit and in the RJCS Report that the HRC create  
326 programming around holidays, “human rights” is a broader umbrella than that. They talked  
327 about it in the language that they developed [in the statement they] sent to the Mayor, but they  
328 are not actually addressing, in this committee, topics such as mental health, housing and  
329 homelessness, healthcare as a human right, and other issues that do not have a holiday. There are  
330 ways the HRC can make sure the City is more inclusive on a simple, experiential level for  
331 citizens interacting with the City. Mr. Bohannon and his team have been thinking about this, and  
332 one of the questions he mentioned is why, for co-ed programs, does the [Rec Center’s] interface  
333 for the registration require you to tell the gender of your child? Why is that relevant? That is an  
334 excellent point. There are many ways in which the City touches the community, where there is  
335 that interface, which are maybe turning people off or making it harder to access. Maybe that is  
336 an appropriate thing for this committee to examine. She was reading the HRC’s purpose again,  
337 and part of it is, to paraphrase, encouraging the breaking down of barriers for people to  
338 participate in the City and the community. The HRC needs to think about that. They are doing  
339 great with events, and in the past two years, have come a long way with that. But what else can  
340 they be doing to make the City more accessible? What about HR training for staff on these  
341 issues? They do not necessarily have the remit to stomp their feet and demand certain things, but  
342 they should think about how to draw attention to needs and encourage and support those needs  
343 being met.

344  
345 Mr. Kirschner stated that he thinks the HRC’s work with the RJCS Report will also help exactly  
346 what she is speaking about. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos agreed.

347  
348 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the other issue is that the HRC still seems to be a “well-  
349 kept secret.” That is another reason she is excited to see Ms. Wold here, because it is great that  
350 she knows they are there. How can the HRC go about making themselves more visible to the  
351 community?

352  
353 Dr. Filiault replied that he thinks part of the reason is because there is a month between  
354 meetings, and it seems to take 15 minutes at the beginning of each meeting to reassemble  
355 themselves and get back into the headspace of what they do. They may need to meet more than  
356 once a month for an hour, to be able to achieve the type of heavy lift Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos  
357 is suggesting, and the type of heavy lift the community may need to achieve the work that needs  
358 to be done, and the work that this report suggests needs to be done. Part of the reason they are  
359 not as visible is, as much as he loves the Rec Center, this might be a committee that needs to be  
360 downtown or at City Hall to be visible to the community.

361  
362 Mr. Bohannon replied that they met for a while at the Library. He continued that they originally  
363 met at the Rec Center and then moved to the Library. The reasons for moving back to the Rec  
364 Center were more space-related, regarding COVID-19. If it works out for the Library, he is okay  
365 with having the meetings there. He does not care where the group meets.

366  
367 Ms. Fiske stated that she wonders if there are other ways to advertise the HRC. For example, she  
368 continued, are there other organizations that could add the HRC's meetings to their calendars?  
369 Unfortunately, the Library cannot, because it is not a Library-sponsored program, but maybe  
370 they could make sure it is in the Shopper News, the community events listing in The Keene  
371 Sentinel, community housing bulletin boards, and so on and so forth.

372  
373 Dr. Saleh asked if the Library has the ability to host hybrid meetings with an online option. Ms.  
374 Fiske replied yes. Discussion continued about the sizes of various spaces and the size needed,  
375 and the Library hours and meeting time.

376  
377 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that in the interest of time, she suggests they add a couple items  
378 to the agenda for discussion, one around making the HRC more visible and perhaps changing  
379 venues, and one around expanding the scope of the HRC's work. Mr. Bohannon suggested it be  
380 "review of committee charge."

381  
382 Mr. Bohannon stated that he notices the HRC's meeting through the Parks & Recreation  
383 Department's MailChimp to about 3,500 people. He continued that he could find out what the  
384 click rate is on that. They could also put it out through the City's MailChimp, which reaches  
385 another couple thousand people. That could be a start. He can give a report next month related  
386 to the click rates, and some ideas for further exposure. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos thanked him.

387  
388 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the HRC will meet next month in this same location, and  
389 will discuss a future meeting venue that would allow them to include the public, not have to end  
390 at 6:00 PM (when the Library closes), and be accessible. Brief discussion continued about  
391 meeting spaces. Mr. Bohannon stated that he and Ms. Fiske will look at possible locations.

392  
393 **7) Adjournment**

394  
395 There being no further business, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 6:13 PM.

396  
397 Respectfully submitted by,  
398 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

399  
400 Reviewed and edited by,  
401 Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

1 City of Keene  
2 New Hampshire

3  
4  
5 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE  
6 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
7

Monday, April 12, 2022

6:30 PM Parks & Recreation Meeting Room

Members Present:

Jan Manwaring  
Dr. Dottie Morris (Zoom)  
Sofia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair  
Marti Fiske  
Hunter Kirschner  
Rabbi Daniel Aronson  
Councilor Catherine Workman

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation & Facilities  
Director

Members Not Present:

Ritu Budakoti, Alternate  
Dr. Shaun Filiault  
8 Dr. Mohammed Saleh  
9

10  
11  
12  
13 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. She stated that the HRC is  
14 here tonight to discuss the Racial Justice and Community Safety (RJCS) Committee's report.  
15 She continued that they will begin with the first recommendation from section *1. Government*  
16 *Leadership*, which she read aloud:  
17

18 *1.A. It is recommended that the City of Keene take a position against racism starting with*  
19 *a strong anti-racist statement. The Committee received multiple suggestions that the City*  
20 *Council issue a strong and clear public statement stating its anti-racist position and*  
21 *commitment to racial equity and inclusion. The public is looking to the City for leadership at*  
22 *a time when acts of racism around the nation are a cause for alarm and a call for change. In*  
23 *addition to issuing a statement, it is recommended that the City Council adopt a Council*  
24 *Goal specifically focused on achieving racial equity in Keene.*  
25

26 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that this is clearly a recommendation that is specifically for the  
27 City Council, and she is not sure what the HRC can do. Ms. Fiske stated that [the statement] is  
28 posted in the lobby of all City buildings. Councilor Workman stated that it was fully adopted

29 over the summer. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that this item is one to check off the list  
30 then. Councilor Workman added that the City Council is working on a goal related to this  
31 [recommendation], too. Ms. Fiske stated that the City Council goals adopted December 17, 2020  
32 includes "...the diverse needs of all Keene residents." Councilor Workman replied that they are  
33 working on new ones right now, which will encapsulate that more specifically.

34

35 Mr. Kirschner suggested the HRC put together some kind of portfolio that documents each of the  
36 steps, such as a binder with photographs, or something online. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied  
37 that that is a good idea. She asked for thoughts. Discussion ensued. Ms. Fiske suggested that  
38 they re-create the RJCS Report with the documentation Mr. Kirschner is suggesting added to it,  
39 such as embedding links within it. Mr. Bohannon replied that the report is embedded in the  
40 spreadsheet that his staff recreated, and they can include links for the activities in each section.  
41 He continued that it would thus live in the Parks & Rec drive, and they could use Ms. Fiske's  
42 help with this. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that sounds good; they will keep it in the  
43 spreadsheet, at least for the HRC's purposes, and if they want to publish their results in a more  
44 "public-friendly" format they can consider doing what Ms. Fiske suggested, as an extension of  
45 this document.

46

47 Moving on, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos read the next Government Leadership recommendation  
48 aloud:

49

50 ***1.B. It is recommended that the City work with community stakeholders to establish clear***  
51 ***community racial equity and inclusivity goals and that the goals be widely adopted by the***  
52 ***City and Keene agencies and businesses. This report is just the beginning of a process. Next***  
53 ***steps will require identification of clear and measurable goals and accountability measures***  
54 ***together with other organizations across the community as well as a plan for implementation***  
55 ***and review of progress made over time. This process can only be successful if built upon***  
56 ***information gathered in section 2 of this document, "Public Input and Community***  
57 ***Education", which aims to specifically identify the local challenges and biases to overcome.***

58

59 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that this is huge. Dr. Morris replied that it mainly says there  
60 needs to be a collective group of people coming together to come up with an implementation  
61 plan. Mr. Kirschner asked if it is the HRC's work to determine what this body would look like.  
62 Discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon stated that the HRC and the Monadnock Diversity, Equity,  
63 Inclusion, and Belonging Coalition (MDEIB) are the groups this recommendation refers to.  
64 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the recommendation sounds like an iteration of what the  
65 HRC is doing right now. Others agreed. Dr. Morris replied that when the report was written, the  
66 MDEIB had not formed yet. She continued that the MDEIB is now taking on items that no one  
67 was taking on when the report was being written.

68

69 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that two activities might meet this criteria: 1) the meeting the  
70 HRC is having right now, 2) the MDEIB's work. She continued that the HRC has an action to  
71 ask Dr. Morris and Councilor Workman to help the HRC interface with the MDEIB and

## HRC Meeting Minutes

72 understand the MDEIB's work. Something the HRC is not necessarily capturing is the public  
73 input part. Is that what the MDEIB is doing? Members of the MDEIB give input, but that is not  
74 the broad public. Dr. Morris replied that some of the recommendations later in the RJCS  
75 Committee's report were a result of public input. She continued that the main thing is that  
76 nothing would be implemented until after they show there is a specific plan, and that is what the  
77 public could look at and potentially say, "Oh, that is not what we said we needed you to do," or  
78 "Yes, that is exactly what we needed; you captured it."

79  
80 Councilor Workman replied that the MDEIB has also held several public input forums and have  
81 continued plans to do that as they make progress and have updates. Mr. Bohannon asked how  
82 the public knows about the forums. Councilor Workman replied that they are posted on the  
83 YMCA's website and through the Shopper News and the City.

84  
85 Ms. Manwaring stated that Councilor Workman or Dr. Morris could give a report at each HRC  
86 meeting, about what is happening with the MDEIB, to help them feel more connected. Chair  
87 Cunha-Vasconcelos replied yes, that is what the committee asked Councilor Workman and Dr.  
88 Morris at the last meeting. She continued that that is part of it, but she thinks there is more to  
89 this action item. There is the "clear and measurable goals and accountability" part. How do they  
90 get those goals?

91  
92 Mr. Bohannon stated that the public input is probably the part that the HRC is not achieving. He  
93 continued that he thinks they *are* achieving the public education part, with nearly every event  
94 they have on the agenda, such as Pride, MLK Day, and Keene International Festival. Every  
95 event has an educational component, because educating the community is usually the reason for  
96 having the event.

97  
98 Dr. Morris stated that the RJCS Committee held public forums, and the input the committee  
99 received from those forums resulted in the report that the HRC is now working with. She  
100 continued that further in the report are the recommendations that came from that public input.  
101 Now the question is how to operationalize them. The raw data from the public input still exists,  
102 if they want to look at it, to see that the RJCS Committee created its recommendations from that  
103 input. The HRC's job is to narrow down what they are able to do, and come up with some  
104 immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term goals and a plan. The Education Committee of the  
105 MDEIB is planning to do a needs assessment to see what type of education people need. For  
106 example, people might need bystander training. Once that need is determined, they then come  
107 up with a plan for how to implement that. She thinks that (needs assessment and implementation  
108 planning) is what the HRC is supposed to be doing, too. Or that they at least could be doing.

109  
110 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if it is correct paraphrasing to say that 1.B. describes the process  
111 that the HRC is undergoing right now, and says that the data is already here, and that the HRC  
112 needs to now create the action plan and bring it to the public. She asked if recommendation 1.B.  
113 is an overarching description of the entire effort they are going through right now. Dr. Morris  
114 replied yes. Councilor Workman agreed. She continued that she would like to see the MDEIB

115 and the HRC work closely together, so they are not stepping on each other's toes and not  
116 duplicating the process and intentions.

117

118 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that they will move on from 1.B. but use it as a check-in to  
119 make sure they are following the intent. Others agreed.

120

121 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos read 1.C. aloud:

122

123 ***1.C. It is recommended that the City continue its commitment and efforts toward racial***  
124 ***justice and community safety whether via an existing committee such as the Human Rights***  
125 ***Committee, a new equity and inclusion task force, or a joint effort of multiple community***  
126 ***organizations and agencies. Again, this report is just the beginning - just the first step. There***  
127 ***is much work to be done and much motivation to make a difference. A strategic approach to***  
128 ***moving Keene toward racial justice and inclusivity will require consistent effort, analysis***  
129 ***and adjustment including regular follow-up on the recommendations in this report. There is***  
130 ***also much data available that, when collected and analyzed, can help identify where and to***  
131 ***what extent bias exists in our community. This data will help build awareness of the situation***  
132 ***and emphasize the danger of complacency.***

133

134 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that it sounds like this is the next step to the same thought. She  
135 continued that if the group is comfortable, she is going to move on.

136

137 ***1.D. It is recommended that the City promote diversity in its boards and commissions***  
138 ***membership and responsibilities. Racial diversity amongst City committee members will***  
139 ***provide important diverse perspectives that benefit the community and will help build***  
140 ***sensitivity to and eliminate implicit bias over time. Committee charges and responsibilities***  
141 ***should be evaluated to determine if they welcome diversity and provide realistic***  
142 ***opportunities for inclusion.***

143

144 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she supports this concept, but is not sure how to put this in  
145 action. She continued that at one point, the Mayor had asked the HRC to recommend potential  
146 committee members. Mr. Bohannon stated that the City created a volunteer statement that is on  
147 the City's website and every public notice related to committee meetings. He continued that  
148 when a public notice goes out about an upcoming meeting, it includes an "if you would like to be  
149 involved, click here" statement. Staff looked at all of the potential barriers to participation and  
150 tried to remove them. The City Clerk's Office did some videos with the Community  
151 Development Department to talk about their committees and try to engage people. This is a hard  
152 one. They will try to ask people individually if they want to join a board or committee, and the  
153 Mayor tries to reach out to as many people as he can, but it is difficult to find volunteers.  
154 Discussion ensued, and Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that not everyone is going to be  
155 checking the City's website to learn about volunteer opportunities. How can the HRC facilitate  
156 this connection? Dr. Morris replied that they can develop a process, finding multiple avenues to  
157 let people know that their help is needed. For example, the HRC can send a list of open

## HRC Meeting Minutes

158 positions to the Keene Pride group, the group that organizes Holi Fest, and others, and go to  
159 where people are instead of expecting people to come to the City. They can hand out flyers at  
160 local businesses, do public announcements, and take other actions to make sure this information  
161 is widespread.

162  
163 Councilor Workman asked if they have a running roster of the openings. Mr. Bohannon replied  
164 on the committees' webpages. He continued that there is a need to promote the City more. The  
165 City does not promote the committees' work very well, if at all. The information is available but  
166 not promoted. He sends out the HRC's information via the Parks & Rec's MailChimp, because  
167 it hits a very different audience than the City of Keene's MailChimp. That is what they need to  
168 do for more committees. Mr. Kirschner stated that the events the HRC puts on are perfect for  
169 trying to recruit folks. It is about further engaging the folks who have already chosen to show  
170 up, and encouraging them to continue showing up.

171  
172 Dr. Morris stated that goal #1 under recommendation 1.D. would be "increase visibility of  
173 opportunities for people to join City groups." How to do this includes: go to where people are,  
174 instead of expecting people to come to the website; make sure the information is posted broadly;  
175 and make sure the information goes to groups or organizations who represent diverse groups of  
176 people. Ms. Manwaring replied that she is part of a group that is putting on a volunteer fair on  
177 May 17 from 3:00 to 7:00 PM in the Michael EJ Blastos Room, and the City could have a table  
178 there.

179  
180 Mr. Aronson stated that in addition to attending events like that, he suggests they identify  
181 audiences the HRC wants to send talking points to, or where the HRC wants to be on the agenda.  
182 He continued that the clergy team of the Monadnock Interfaith Project (MIP) would be happy to  
183 devote a sermon to public service and give people instruction on how to do it. He can imagine  
184 that at gatherings of the school board or parents' groups there could be an announcement or  
185 handout about what the City needs and how to get involved. He suggested they take the time  
186 right now to create the list of groups and organizations.

187  
188 Discussion ensued, and the HRC came up with the following: the Monadnock Interfaith Project,  
189 the Keene India Association, Rotary Club, Lions Club, ESL classes and new Americans,  
190 Monadnock Peer Support, Chamber of Commerce, Keene School Board, teachers and educators  
191 in Keene, local parents' groups, local unions (e.g. hospitality, cafeteria workers, utility workers,  
192 telecommunications), and Cheshire Medical Center.

193  
194 Mr. Bohannon stated that they have a good list so far. He continued that they can work with the  
195 City Clerk's Office and others in the City to do a better job of announcing in different forms of  
196 media. Discussion continued and HRC members suggested volunteer openings be posted,  
197 perhaps as a flyer, in places like: The Shopper News; places new residents are likely to visit, like  
198 the DMV and real estate agents; the City Clerk's Office and on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall.

199



## HRC Meeting Minutes

200 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked how they can come up with an action plan for this. Mr.  
201 Bohannon replied that he will have a conversation with the City Clerk's Office. Discussion  
202 ensued about how much detail to plan in now, versus continuing to go through the RJCS Report  
203 right now. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos suggested they do a first pass/top level now and then come  
204 back to it later and drill down as they go.

205

206 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos read E. aloud:

207

208 *1.E. It is recommended that the City promote festivals that celebrate racial diversity. The*  
209 *International Festival and Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast are good examples of existing*  
210 *local celebrations that welcome and promote racial equity. Juneteenth, Holi Festival, Pride*  
211 *Celebrations, Cinco De Mayo, and other celebrations provide additional opportunities to*  
212 *appreciate diversity and to overcome stereotypes, build awareness and encourage unity.*

213

214 Dr. Morris stated that they could say that the HRC will continue to do what they are doing.  
215 Others agreed.

216

217 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos moved on to the second category of recommendations in the RJCS  
218 Committee's report, **2. Public Input & Community Education**. She read aloud the first  
219 recommendation:

220

221 *2.A. It is recommended that the City, school systems (k-12-college) and community*  
222 *organizations and groups provide regular, safe and open opportunities for difficult*  
223 *conversations about local, personal racial justice experiences allowing input to be in-person or*  
224 *written, anonymous or personally identified. The purpose of this effort must be specifically*  
225 *focused on welcoming and encouraging testimony from black people, indigenous people and*  
226 *people of color about their experience in Keene – including those who are reluctant to share or*  
227 *who may not trust that their input will improve racial equity in Keene. It is also of utmost*  
228 *importance that those who wish to share anonymously have the opportunity to and that they feel*  
229 *comfortable doing so.*

230

231 Dr. Morris stated that this was about having a mechanism for people to report incidents that may  
232 occur. She continued that people were saying, for example, "I do not know who to go to to  
233 report that while I was walking down the street someone called me the N word." Do you call the  
234 Police, or report it somewhere else? The committee wanted to come up with some kind of form,  
235 she recalls. As for the education piece, they would have to involve the schools.

236

237 Mr. Kirschner asked who would receive such reports, and who would respond, aside from Police.  
238 Ms. Fiske replied that if there were a place for reports to go, it would require follow-up. It would  
239 be a heavy lift. If an incident happens at school, you could track down administration, but what  
240 if it happens in a store or on the street? How do you hold someone responsible or follow  
241 through? What does follow-through look like? Discussion ensued.

242

## HRC Meeting Minutes

243 Mr. Aronson stated that an example is that the Jewish community knows the Anti-Defamation  
244 League (ADL) is a central address to report acts of anti-Semitism, whether it is a kid drawing a  
245 swastika on a desk and a teacher brushing it off, or someone being fired due to discrimination  
246 because they are Jewish. He worked for the ADL for a year, and the ADL has a person who is  
247 networked into law enforcement at all levels in the state and they have to report that, and stay on  
248 law enforcement until it is investigated. Sometimes it is just a disgruntled person and there is  
249 really nothing there, but sometimes it is serious. There could be a list of reporting agencies like  
250 that. He asked if the City has an ombudsman, like a person you could go to for almost any  
251 complaint, such as discrimination or harassment of a homeless person. Mr. Bohannon replied  
252 that a person with a complaint would probably go to the most appropriate department or it would  
253 get filtered to the City Manager and she would direct it down to the department level. For  
254 example, a homeless person would go to Human Services, or the Police, depending on the  
255 incident.

256  
257 Mr. Bohannon asked Dr. Morris if the RJCS Committee was mainly directing people to the  
258 Police, related to this. Dr. Morris replied yes, that is what she remembers. She continued that  
259 what became a problem, as she understands, is that someone would contact the Police, because  
260 the RJCS Committee was told that was the best mechanism, but a step was missed because the  
261 dispatcher did not get the same message. Someone would call to report an incident that  
262 happened on the street, and the dispatcher would not pass it along. The first step would be  
263 determining who should get that initial report, and then, how it is disseminated. She hopes that  
264 whoever the MDEIB hires as a Diversity Officer can be the person who takes this on and is able  
265 to do triage, but that is down the road. In the meantime, what mechanism can be put in place? If  
266 it is the KPD, then there needs to be a training so everyone knows what to say and do. Councilor  
267 Workman replied that the Police feel unequipped to deal with some of those calls because there  
268 was not a criminal component to them; they were just “complaints” or notifications of incidents.  
269 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that some are incidents that do not rise to the level of a crime,  
270 which is what Police are trained to handle.

271  
272 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if the action item here is to identify a forum for this kind of  
273 reporting and figure out how to disseminate the existence of that forum. She continued that the  
274 other part of this is that people need to know who they should report to. Mr. Aronson replied  
275 that he thinks the City should have a central person, an ombudsman who is a trusted person. He  
276 continued that it should be a person who is not law enforcement and has experience in social  
277 work, education, psychology, or something similar, and has the skills to hold the pain of the  
278 person who has been attacked or assaulted, and also has the trust of the City and law enforcement  
279 so they can be that bridge. Others agreed.

280  
281 Mr. Kirschner stated that 2.A. continues on the next page:

282  
283 *There are members of the public who are reluctant to speak about their concerns. People have*  
284 *stories that they are not sharing. Personal conversations are needed to get tangible feedback, but*  
285 *being vulnerable and exposed is not comfortable. The committee did hear some testimonies and*

286 *agreed that bringing these personal experiences to light will be necessary to disrupt local*  
287 *implicit bias and complacency, to build a broader awareness of the true extent of the problem in*  
288 *Keene. This will require multiple platforms such as anonymous surveys and strategic dialogue*  
289 *including public bodies and key stakeholders. There are two important objectives here: to*  
290 *provide a safe and welcome means for victims of racism to share their experiences without fear*  
291 *of negative consequences, and to engage those who do not experience racism in order to*  
292 *increase awareness of the existence and the consequences of silent racism.*

293

294 Mr. Kirschner continued that it means they are looking for people who are harmed by racism to  
295 be witnessed and validated, and to be able to share with the community at large that racism does  
296 happen. Those are two different things. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that one is collecting  
297 the data and addressing various incidents as they arise, and the other is collecting the data and  
298 sharing the aggregate with the community.

299

300 Dr. Morris stated that she agrees with Mr. Aronson's idea of having a person (like an  
301 ombudsman). Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that it is two facets of the same role; the  
302 person's job would be to the receiver and address the person directly, but also to inform the  
303 community what it is that you are taking in and seeing. She continued that the position in the  
304 City would have to be created, and that is a longer-term process. What would the process be? A  
305 recommendation to the City Council? Mr. Bohannon replied yes, but at the same time, the City  
306 Council has a policy of "no new positions." Dr. Morris replied that she hopes the Diversity  
307 Officer the MDEIB finds could have this as an early task to tackle, but that is still a couple years  
308 down the road. Councilor Workman asked if they could reach out to the American Civil  
309 Liberties Union (ACLU) and see if the closest chapter has a liaison or someone who could help  
310 out in the region, for the City initiative. Ms. Fiske replied or the ADL. Mr. Aronson stated that  
311 the incoming director of the Cohen Center [For Holocaust and Genocide Studies] would be a  
312 great person to bring into this conversation; her experience is with community organizing.

313

314 Mr. Bohannon stated that maybe each HRC member could have conversations with folks who  
315 have participated in this conversation to ask who they contact, or if there is someone they are  
316 aware of. He continued that he thinks Dr. Morris had New Hampshire Listens here for some  
317 event, maybe through the Governor's Council [Governor's Advisory Council on Diversity and  
318 Inclusion] or something related to race and conversation/awareness. Dr. Morris replied yes, that  
319 was with the Governor's Council, and they could look at that data, too, specific to Keene. She  
320 thinks it is still up on the group's website, and if not, she has the raw data somewhere on her  
321 computer and could share it with the HRC. A lot of the data was validated and replicated  
322 information that the group received through the public hearings. She likes the plan of talking to  
323 more people and getting more input about how they could implement this, in light of the budget  
324 restraints and constraints. Discussion continued.

325

326 Mr. Bohannon stated that he is just thinking aloud, but maybe they could run a series with New  
327 Hampshire Listens, in and around the community. They would have to come up with a  
328 conversation starter and an idea of where they want to go. Maybe there would be park

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329 opportunities now that it is almost summer. In the park, people might be more open and  
330 engaged, as opposed to in a multi-purpose room of a City building. The Library might feel more  
331 welcoming, too. New Hampshire Listens might be interested in this. He could look into it  
332 before the next meeting, if the HRC wants. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied yes. In response  
333 to HRC members' questions about New Hampshire Listens, Ms. Fiske read its mission statement  
334 aloud: "*Our mission is to help New Hampshire residents talk, listen, and act together so*  
335 *communities can work for everyone. We envision a New Hampshire where residents are*  
336 *connected, engaged, and heard in decisions that impact their lives and where all have equitable*  
337 *access to justice, opportunity, and liberty.*" She continued that it is part of the Carsey School of  
338 Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. Brief discussion continued about the  
339 details/logistics of working with New Hampshire Listens, and the cost. Dr. Morris stated that  
340 there might be local people who have the skills and ability to do what New Hampshire Listens  
341 does, without the cost; she has a few people in mind.

342  
343 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if Mr. Bohannon meant he could look into this New Hampshire  
344 Listens idea by the next meeting in which the HRC works on the RJCS Report. Mr. Bohannon  
345 replied he can report back at the next HRC meeting. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if, at the  
346 next meeting, Dr. Morris could share the names of the people she has in mind for possibly  
347 facilitating a series like this. Dr. Morris replied yes, one person, whose name is okay to share  
348 tonight, is Mary Gannett, who lives in Winchester.

349  
350 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos moved on to 2.B.

351  
352 ***2.B. It is recommended that the City meet regularly with other businesses to share local***  
353 ***observations and data and to develop, implement and measure organizational and community***  
354 ***programs designed to 1) improve racial equity and inclusivity and 2) build public awareness of***  
355 ***and knowledge to combat implicit bias. Keene is not alone in its motivation to address racial***  
356 ***inequity and to improve inclusivity. There are well established programs and standards that can***  
357 ***establish key objectives and a framework for this work. Examples include the NH Governor's***  
358 ***Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion, the New Hampshire Commission for Human***  
359 ***Rights, the "Restorative Justice Vehicle for Dialogue, Organization For Chief Diversity Officers***  
360 ***Tenets", and the "Race and Equity in New Hampshire Series", to name a few. Businesses***  
361 ***engaged in this process should include the following, at minimum: Government Agencies,***  
362 ***Regional NAACP, Schools, Regional ACLU, Churches, Cohen Center For Holocaust and***  
363 ***Genocide Studies, Healthcare Providers, Keene State College, Chamber of Commerce, Franklin***  
364 ***Pierce University, Keene Family YMCA, Antioch University New England, Keene Police***  
365 ***Department, River Valley Community College, Cheshire County Sheriff, and Keene Public***  
366 ***Library. This will likely require implicit bias training for the people involved, and meetings***  
367 ***should be facilitated by a professional with racial equity experience and skillset.***

368  
369 Dr. Morris stated that the HRC is on the list of folks to hear the results of [Keene State  
370 College's] climate survey, abbreviated, because it is 90 slides. She continued that she thinks  
371 Franklin Pierce just did a climate survey, too. They can check with Pierre [Morton]. Chair

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372 Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if hearing about KSC's climate survey can be on the May agenda. Dr.  
373 Morris asked about Franklin Pierce and potentially Antioch. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied  
374 that for timing reasons, it would work best to hear from one group at a time, not all in one  
375 meeting.

376

377 Mr. Kirschner stated that this recommendation feels like building on and responding to the  
378 public data that they might gather from a public forum. How is the data being taken, in terms of  
379 these groups? Ms. Fiske replied that it also says to implement organizational and community  
380 programs, which the HRC is doing, but unfortunately they have run into some problems with  
381 partnering with some of the other organizations.

382

383 Mr. Kirschner asked if "the City" means the HRC. Others replied no, not necessarily.  
384 Discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon stated that going back to Mr. Aronson's point about creating  
385 a position in the City, if the HRC creates an opportunity through New Hampshire Listens, they  
386 could reach out to the Keene business community and invite them to be present.

387

388 Councilor Workman stated that they could begin by finding out which local businesses have a  
389 Chief Equity Officer position, and create something like a database of these people in the region,  
390 so the HRC has a contact list. Maybe they could invite the Chief Equity Officers/DEIB Officers  
391 to the HRC's meetings. Mr. Bohannon asked if the MDEIB has started that. Councilor  
392 Workman replied that she does not think so. Dr. Morris replied that the MDEIB is still raising  
393 funds to hire the person. Councilor Workman replied that they do not know which businesses  
394 have DEIB Officers. Dr. Morris replied that if not an actual DEIB Officer, it could just be a  
395 contact person. She continued that many people think to go through HR, but many times HR  
396 staff members do not know that [issues related to diversity and inclusion] are part of their job.  
397 Ms. Fiske stated that the HRC could invite HR people and DEIB Officers to the New Hampshire  
398 Listens series. Mr. Bohannon stated that the City has an HR network, because they all email one  
399 another [and have meetings]; that might be something for the HRC to tap into. He can talk with  
400 the City's HR Director about it. If this HR network has lunch together, this is an example of  
401 what Mr. Aronson and Dr. Morris said about going to where the people are. Dr. Morris asked  
402 what information the HRC would be seeking from the members of this HR network. Mr.  
403 Bohannon replied that he meant they could share information with the HR folks about what the  
404 HRC is and the events they do, and share that the HRC's purpose is to allow voices to be heard  
405 within the community and that HR staff could filter through/communicate with the HRC. Or the  
406 HRC could arrange training for HR staff, and so on and so forth. It would be about making HR  
407 staff aware of what the HRC is. Discussion ensued about how the idea is to create relationships  
408 with other groups (like HR staff) and then think about how to partner and do the work together.

409

410 Ms. Fiske stated that 2.B. is about sharing information and observations, and developing  
411 programs, and using that to combat bias. Mr. Bohannon stated that how he reads this is: the KSC  
412 will probably do their thing and report out to KSC; the KSD is going to report out to the KSD;  
413 and the City would do it through the City Council meetings, which [are not well attended by the  
414 public]. It seems like various groups do report out, but he is not sure they are collectively

## HRC Meeting Minutes

415 sharing the information together. Ms. Fiske stated that they could create public forums regarding  
416 the climate surveys of other organizations. Mr. Aronson replied that if each group has a piece,  
417 bringing them together gives a fuller picture of the community. Ms. Manwaring stated that what  
418 is happening at Keene High School (KHS), relevant to all this, is not being shared. Chair Cunha-  
419 Vasconcelos stated that if the HRC can get on people's radar better, it would be great for the  
420 whole community to have access to information like this.

421  
422 Ms. Manwaring agreed, and stated that for example, if the Keene schools are not sharing what is  
423 going on or are trying to sugarcoat problems, then no one can help them. Ms. Fiske replied that?  
424 to go even further with the example, what if it is not just the schools, but other organizations, too  
425 That is a sign of a wider problem that needs attention. Maybe it is not just kids acting out;  
426 maybe it is something kids are learning from parents or other adults. Mr. Bohannon replied that  
427 KHS is under heavy fire right now. He continued that at their community forums, it will be  
428 interesting to find out how KHS reports out and what action they have taken from those forums.  
429 He was present at one. Some folks did talk about race and inclusion within the school and how  
430 the LGBT community feels within the school.

431  
432 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that the HRC wanted to invite Superintendent Malay to a  
433 meeting. Mr. Bohannon replied that he can come to the May meeting. He continued that the  
434 HRC can listen to what he shares, and ask questions. Discussion continued. Dr. Morris spoke of  
435 how if the HRC (or others) do not know what is going on, the HRC (and others) cannot help, and  
436 they want to help. She is hearing from parents that things are rather dire right now. Responsible  
437 adults in the community, like the HRC, need to help, for the students' sake. It is not solely the  
438 young people's responsibility to "just pull it together."

439  
440 Ms. Manwaring stated that recently, a [member of the public] came to an HRC meeting wanting  
441 to have a conversation about people with mental health issues being involved in the community,  
442 but this person left the HRC meeting upon discovering that the HRC was discussing race. She  
443 continued that as the Human Rights Committee, their work is about more than just race. It is the  
444 LGBTQ community, sexism, ageism, developmental disabilities, mental health, and more. She  
445 does not know how to balance it all, in an hour-long meeting. Dr. Morris replied that the HRC's  
446 charge was specifically to concentrate on the RJCS Report. Ms. Manwaring replied yes, but it is  
447 not the only thing that the HRC does. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that they touched on  
448 what Ms. Manwaring is saying, at the last meeting during New Business. She continued that she  
449 talked about how the HRC has focused on elements of diversity that have a holiday associated,  
450 and they have not necessarily touched on topics like housing rights, mental illness, and the list  
451 that Ms. Manwaring just brought up. She also heard others saying that a one-hour meeting each  
452 month is just not enough time in which to cover all this. It is an important discussion to have,  
453 but the purpose of tonight's meeting is to focus on the RJCS Report, as they were charged with.  
454 Yes, she believes the scope of what the HRC is looking at needs to be broadened. The HRC's  
455 mission is "*to promote the principles of social justice, non-violence, equity, and multiculturalism*  
456 *through education programs, community service, and public events.*" Today is about this report,  
457 but Ms. Manwaring is right. Ms. Manwaring asked if the HRC can address this at the next

458 meeting, because it [is overwhelming], and there are different ways go to, like having  
459 committees, and she fears that if they are not careful, they will do a little teeny bit of work in  
460 each topic and not be at all effective. They do not have to talk about it tonight, but she wants it  
461 on the agenda.

462

463 Mr. Bohannon stated that regarding agendas, the agenda kind of gets created based on the  
464 meeting minutes, and new items go under New Business. At the same time, staff works with the  
465 Chair to create the agenda. If he sends out the agenda and nothing comes back to him, it stays as  
466 is. If Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replies to the agenda he sends her with a request to talk about  
467 XYZ, it goes on the agenda. He thinks they can change the agenda a bit. They had changed it to  
468 focus a little more on the events, because there was a lot to talk about. The meetings do not have  
469 to be an hour. They can be 90 minutes. This committee goes back a long way, and there were  
470 times, in the past, when this committee did not have a lot of action items and the group would  
471 just talk about the same things repeatedly. Now, having the RJCS Report, having the events,  
472 changing and broadening the focus to some of those larger community concerns, will drive the  
473 HRC to have longer meetings. If the group wants to change the meeting time or day, they can –  
474 the meeting time or day should not change month to month, and should be consistent once  
475 established, but it does not need to be Monday at 5:00 PM. That is just what worked for the  
476 members of the HRC ten years ago.

477

478 Discussion ensued. Mr. Kirschner stated that the conversation with Superintendent Malay will  
479 probably take up the majority of the May meeting. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos asked if the chairs  
480 of the [working groups for] the events could submit updates, in writing, to be included in the  
481 agenda packets. She continued that that way, they do not need to spend meeting time talking  
482 about the events. This request will have to go out via email, since not all working group chairs  
483 are here tonight. Mr. Bohannon replied that is a great idea. He continued that he will work with  
484 Kristy [Morrison, Parks & Rec staff member] to reach out to everyone and get those updates on a  
485 regular basis. Spending less time during meetings talking about the events will save room for  
486 other new agenda items, all of the action items that have developed from tonight's meeting, such  
487 as the New Hampshire Listens series, if it happens. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied yes, the  
488 HRC has a huge opportunity to improve the environment in Keene, but it will take a lot of  
489 energy and effort from the HRC and they cannot do it alone; they need community support. Mr.  
490 Bohannon replied that there are alternate member seats available, so more people can come in.

491

492 Moving on to section 4. *City and Community*, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos read the first  
493 recommendation aloud:

494

495 ***4. A. It is recommended that the City assign an administrative role within the City***  
496 ***government moving forward the mission of diversity, equity and inclusion set forth by this***  
497 ***Committee.***

498

499 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that they already talked about this tonight. Mr. Aronson replied  
500 yes, his ombudsman idea. Dr. Morris replied that this is something for City government to take  
501 on. Brief discussion ensued.

502

503 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos read aloud:

504

505 ***4.B. It is recommended that the City and Keene employers regularly conduct diversity, equity***  
506 ***and inclusion training for employees that fosters an open and welcoming workplace culture***  
507 ***for all people.***

508

509 Ms. Fiske stated that she was thinking about this one, as it is something she personally has been  
510 working on with her staff (at the Library). She has been collecting available trainings, and there  
511 are many available online, for free. Can the HRC collect these and share with department heads?  
512 Others agreed and noted that the HRC's website could also be used for this. The list could then  
513 be used by businesses and schools. Dr. Morris stated that the Education group of the MDEIB is  
514 planning trainings, to offer to the MDEIB and the public. She continued that Brattleboro and  
515 Putney, VT towns, had all municipal employees take a 4- or 5-hour training, in-person. Thus,  
516 there is a model out there. With the online trainings, you have to be clear on what you want your  
517 staff to get out of it, because there are so many different trainings out there. You would not want  
518 employees to be put in a position where they do not have the basic information to be able to  
519 understand the training, which makes them even more anxious about it. It would have to be  
520 separated into categories, like beginning level, intermediate, and so on and so forth, to help  
521 people understand what the training entails. The list would need curation. And there are some  
522 horrible trainings that border on unethical.

523

524 Ms. Manwaring asked if the HRC can get an intern, because this [collecting and curating a list of  
525 trainings] is something an intern could do. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos replied that an intern  
526 might not have the knowledge to differentiate between a good and bad training. Ms. Fiske  
527 replied that the intern could speak with the HRC about it. Mr. Bohannon replied that someone  
528 would have to manage the intern. He continued that he will follow up with the HR Department,  
529 because he knows that although COVID-19 stymied things, there are online trainings that  
530 definitely can be done. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos stated that she recalls him saying HR had  
531 plans to do in-person trainings but COVID-19 stymied it. Mr. Bohannon replied that he will  
532 revisit it with Beth Fox. Mr. Aronson asked if there are hurdles to this that they should be  
533 thinking about. Will people start yelling that "critical race theory is poison" and "You can't  
534 subject me to this training," and all of that? Dr. Morris replied that is the point she was trying to  
535 make; you have to clearly understand what you are trying to accomplish. You could do a lot of  
536 this work without even mentioning critical race theory. Most people who complain about that do  
537 not even know what it is, and sometimes even people who defend it do not know what it is.  
538 Most people probably have not received adequate training in that area, even people who have  
539 studied race and racism broadly, so she knows no Kindergarten teacher in the US is teaching  
540 critical race theory [as some people accuse].

541



542 Mr. Kirschner stated that there might be some pushback like Mr. Aronson is talking about, and it  
543 happens within the partnerships they are building with City department heads, employers, and  
544 others. The HRC should be able to explain the value of the trainings, when there is pushback.  
545 Dr. Morris replied that it is all how it is framed; they have to set up a particular frame about it  
546 that 1) allows for people to see themselves in the training, and 2) is called something like  
547 “community building,” instead of something like “diversity training.” When she thinks about  
548 some of the trainings they have already done as a committee, she does not think they called them  
549 “diversity trainings.” They were trainings around building a better community, building a more  
550 inclusive community, and so on and so forth, and she does not think a community member who  
551 attended those trainings would say anything was ‘rammed down their throats.’ It was more  
552 about self-exploration and how to build better connections among people in order to be a better  
553 city. They can talk about that without even naming it that, while still covering the same  
554 materials.

555

556 Mr. Bohannon stated that if they want to build a better employee base, they need to do those  
557 things, as an organization. He continued that that was the premise of the training a couple weeks  
558 ago with New Hampshire Listens for the Parks and Recreation Association – think about who  
559 you are employing, and think about how many [youth workers] who come through your  
560 programs aspire to be or feel included in that process. Let them be who they should be and want  
561 to be, and encourage that. Let the [youth workers] then showcase themselves back to the  
562 campers they are participating with, because you never know who you are going to touch and be  
563 able to inspire through that process. It was hard for some communities to listen to, and other  
564 communities talked about how they are already doing it and need to be better at it. The forty  
565 communities that were there of course wanted to be better at it, and there were other  
566 communities in the Parks and Recreation Association that did not turn out. It was not just about  
567 race; it was also about LGBTQA and more, trying to make sure they fully encompass people.  
568 Those are the conversations they need to have with City employees in all departments. People  
569 who work in the Parks Division are out and about, and parks are spaces where anybody and  
570 everybody should be able to go and feel free and welcome and like they belong there, and should  
571 not have to worry about experiencing prejudice. It is important. And it is the same scenario for  
572 other departments, like Public Works and the Library.

573

574 Mr. Bohannon continued that he and Ms. Fiske have had conversations with the City’s HR  
575 Director and can tag team again and make this happen. HR staff have had a lot on their plate  
576 with COVID-19 response. He heard a podcast last night about how people lead during the  
577 pandemic, and how leading outside of the pandemic is a different mindset and it is not the same  
578 mindset as it was pre-pandemic, as many people are thinking and should not be thinking. Many  
579 people felt burnt out. [During the pandemic], aid money and grants were coming at them and  
580 they had all these projects to create but were still trying to do all the other stuff, and it gets  
581 overwhelming. HR staff has definitely felt that on this front, not being able to provide staff the  
582 opportunity to do some of the trainings. He and Ms. Fiske will reach out again. Mr. Aronson  
583 asked if the HRC should invite someone from HR to the June meeting. Would that help them  
584 feel heard and supported? Mr. Bohannon replied that he can ask.

## HRC Meeting Minutes

585  
586 Dr. Morris stated that with the work in Brattleboro, people assumed the Police and Fire  
587 Departments needed the training most, but a lot of information came out of that work as  
588 recommendations to the government body for things that needed to be done to help them feel like  
589 they could do their jobs better. It was interesting how that played out, and as result, Police and  
590 Fire felt heard, and felt supported instead of blamed. The facilitators can shape it and create an  
591 environment that is not about blame. Then there is opportunity for people to meet in small  
592 groups and talk about what else they need in order to more effectively create community. These  
593 trainings can be done in such a way that people do not feel attacked, and feel supported and able  
594 reflect on what they need in order to do a better job. It is all related to DEI.

595  
596 Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos thanked Mr. Bohannon for taking action on this item. She continued  
597 that in the interest of time, the HRC should talk about when to hold another one of these special  
598 meetings to continue work on the RJCS Report. Discussion ensued. The group decided on May  
599 9, 6:30 to 8:30 PM, with a Zoom option as long as a quorum is physically present. Mr.  
600 Bohannon will provide pizza.

601  
602 There being no further business, Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 8:27 PM.

603  
604 Respectfully submitted by,  
605 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

606  
607 Reviewed and edited by,  
608 Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

7/1/19- 6/30/20	HRC	KIF	7/1/20- 6/30/21	HRC	KIF	7/1/21- 6/30/22	HRC	KIF
<b>Balance 7/1/19</b>	\$ 4,574.00	\$ -	<b>Balance 7/1/20</b>	\$ 4,096.73	\$ 3,411.00	<b>Balance 7/1/21</b>	\$ 3,391.88	\$ 2,541.89
	This was entered at 4574.70							
<b>Income</b>			<b>Income</b>			<b>Income</b>		
City of Keene	\$ 500.00		City of Keene	\$ 500.00		City of Keene	\$ 500.00	
Donations KIF		\$ 6,847.83	Donations KIF		\$ -	DONATIONS KIF		\$ 5,000.00
subtotal	\$ 500.00	\$ 6,847.83	subtotal	\$ 500.00	\$ -	subtotal	\$ 500.00	\$ 5,000.00
<b>Total Income</b>	\$ 500.00	\$ 6,847.83	<b>Total Income</b>	\$ 500.00	\$ -	<b>Total Income</b>	\$ 500.00	\$ 5,000.00
<b>Expenses</b>			<b>Expenses</b>			<b>Expenses</b>		
International Festival		\$ 3,436.83	International Festival		\$ 869.11	International Festival		\$ 5,500.57
			Pride Flags - 15	\$ 104.85		Pride Month	\$ -	
			Juneteenth Presenters \$200	\$ 800.00		Juneteenth	\$ -	
			Steve Schuch					
			Hadi Lanceric					
			Jonah Wheeler					
			Jalissa Rodriguez					
			Amina Jordan-Mendez	\$ 300.00				
Martin Luther King Day			Martin Luther King Day	\$ -		Martin Luther King Day	\$ -	
Peter Blood	\$ 500.00		Dr. Jim Waller					
KSC Dining	\$ 477.27							
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 977.27	\$ 3,436.83	<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 1,204.85	\$ 869.11	<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ -	\$ 5,500.57
<b>Net 19-20</b>	\$ (477.27)	\$ 3,411.00	<b>Net 20-21</b>	\$ (704.85)	\$ (869.11)	<b>Net 21-22</b>	\$ 500.00	\$ (500.57)
<b>Balance on hand</b>	\$ 4,096.73	\$ 3,411.00	<b>Balance on hand</b>	\$ 3,391.88	\$ 2,541.89	<b>Balance on hand</b>	\$ 3,891.88	\$ 2,041.32